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Housekeepers' Chat

Monday, December 31, 1928

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Making the Cookstove Cook." Quoted editorial from Kansas State Industrialist; information about stoves from Bureau of Public Roads, U. S. D. A.; recipe from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Cooking Beef According to the Cut."

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"Making the Cookstove Cook" is the title of our talk today. I can remember a time, long years ago, when I would have been very grateful for a little knowledge, about making a cookstove cook. It was the time I made my first cake--to surprise my mother. Proudly I got down the old cookbook, from the top shelf of the cupboard, found the simple recipe I had decided to follow, and mixed the cake. Then I poured the creamy batter into the pan, and put the pan in the oven. Followed anxious moments. I knew nothing about regulating an oven, and that's why my first cake came out of the oven a hopeless, black mass, and my mother found me in tears.

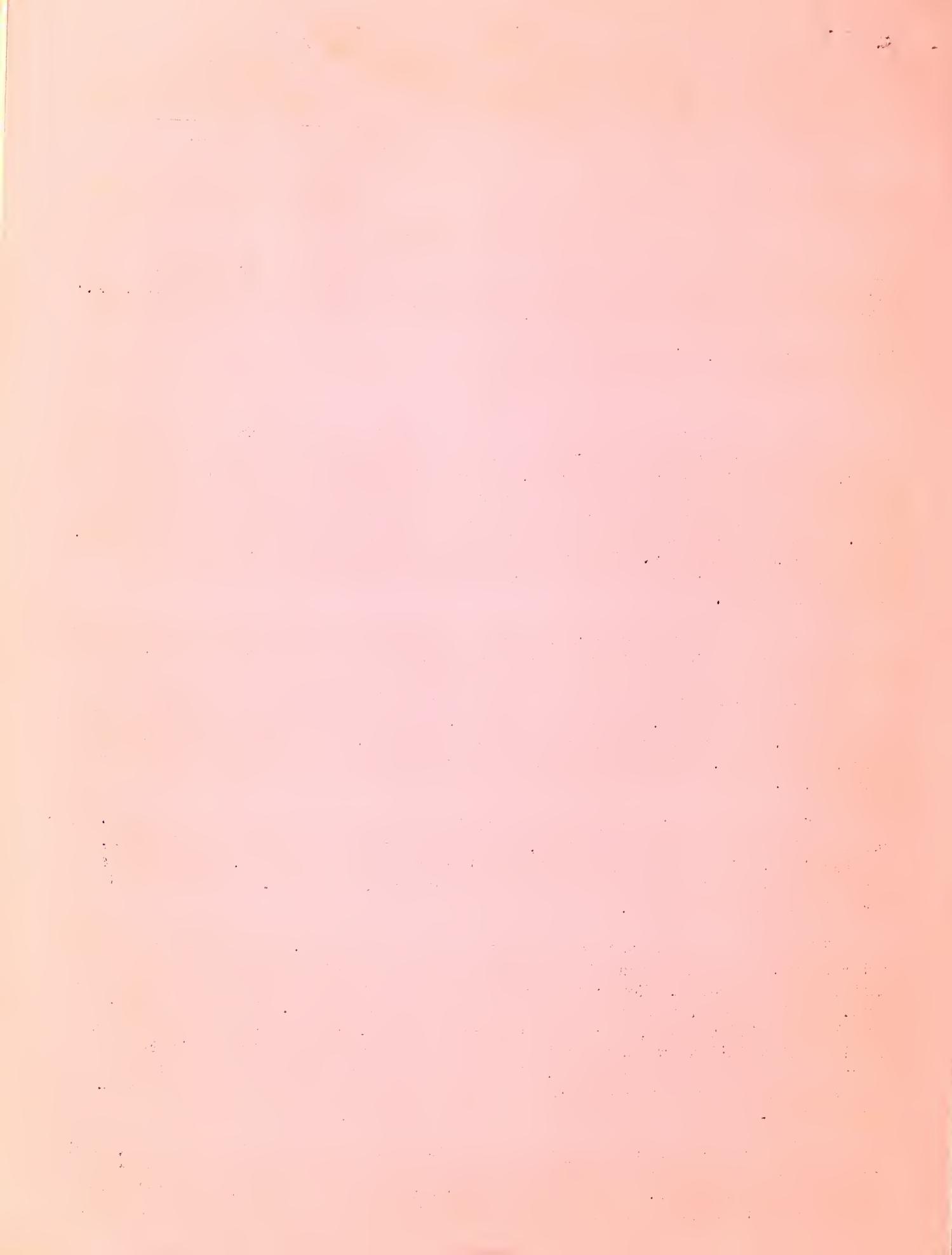
But there are more cheerful memories, connected with the old cookstove. It has been described by a friend of mine in a short piece called "The New Stove":

"What a place was the oven of that old stove! It was good for thawing out cold feet after hunting, skating, or chores, as it was good for biscuits, roast and brown toast. The stove really was the family hearth, for usually you could find your mother there, and where she was, of course, your brothers and your father always came.

"You had to build the fire in it, in the morning, when you were a boy. Corncobs, a little finely split postoak, then larger sticks of postoak, white-oak, or blackjack. It was always the first job of the morning chores. There was a sense of satisfaction in doing it, even on very cold mornings. Building wood fires is an old human urge.

"The old stove was once a new stove. Before it came, there had been a still older stove, one that stood high on curved legs, and had a bulging oven door that opened laterally. You remember when the new stove came, with its hot water tank, warming ovens, and strange oven door opening downward. This stove must have been a kind of gift, for there appeared to be a festive spirit in the air. At first it didn't draw just right, and you wondered if maybe it hadn't been a mistake, to give up the old stove. But after its mechanism was mastered you were satisfied, for your mother assured you it was a lot handier than the discarded stove.

"And now, what was your new stove of boyhood days, today's old stove, must make way for a new electric range--a strange machine that burns fuel brought to it through copper wires. Your mother is glad to have it..... But you can't help feeling regret for you know not exactly what, knowing you'll never again hear the



family news, as you poke up the fire. One supposes your father felt somewhat that way, when his mother began using a wood stove, and gave up cooking at the fireplace!

That's all of the article, which was called "The New Stove."

Now let's see what one should know, in order to make a cookstove do its best. In the first place, all stoves have two systems of drafts--those below the fire, and those above. The bottom drafts should be opened when starting the fire, and when the fire is low and it's necessary to make the fuel burn quickly.

The draft in the chimney should be opened, with the bottom drafts, when the fire is lighted, so that smoke and gases will be carried up the chimney; the other upper drafts, including that in the chimney, are used for checking the intensity of the fire, after the coals have ignited, and ceased emitting gas. Sometimes it's necessary to tip a lid, or open other supplemental drafts, to retard the fire so that it will keep over night, or between cooking periods. Before a cookstove will do its best, it must be operated by some one who knows how to manage the drafts.

The oven of a cookstove needs special attention. The inside of the oven should be wiped occasionally with a slightly greased cloth, to keep it from rusting. Also, the spaces between the top of the oven and the lids, and the side spaces, should be cleaned of soot and fine ashes frequently, for soot and ashes are excellent insulators, and even thin layers reduce the efficiency of the oven. Don't forget to pull up the oven damper before baking, and don't forget to close it down, when cooking on top of the stove.

Don't allow ashes to accumulate below the grate, nor clinkers on the grate. Keep the fire free of clinkers and ashes, and keep the ash pan emptied; if you don't the iron grate will be burned out, or so badly warped that a new one will be needed. Sometimes it's very hard to get a new grate for a somewhat old, but still good, cookstove. It is often less trouble to buy a new stove, than a new grate.

A wood-burning stove is operated in the same way as a coal-burning stove, except possibly in regard to ashes. Ashes on the hearth of a wood-burning stove are needed for controlling the fire while cooking, and for banking it down, when not in use. Partially green wood is valuable as a fuel when you're baking, or when you're banking the fire at night.

And that's all, for the cookstove.

Instead of broadcasting a menu today, I'm going to give you one of the recipes from the leaflet called "Cooking Beef, According to the Cut." Recipes for a number of different cuts of beef have been worked out by the Bureau of Home Economics, and published in this free leaflet. There are accurate directions for cooking the tender cuts of meat, such as Steak, and Rib Roast of Beef, and for cooking the less tender cuts, such as Pot Roast, Flank Steak, Swiss Steak, Hamburg Steak, and Beef Croquettes. There are recipes in the leaflet for Mushroom Sauce and Yorkshire Pudding, too.

If you are one of the many women who are good cooks, except when it comes to cooking meat, my advice is to send for this leaflet. In eight illustrated pages, it contains more sensible information about cooking beef than I've ever seen before.

The recipe I'm giving you today is the one for Broiled Hamburg Steak on Onion Rings. I broadcast it once before--since then I've had so many calls for the recipe, that out of self defense I must broadcast it again. I should judge from the number of letters about it that at least 5,000 housewives have tried it, and they say it's "wonderful." Five thousand housewives can't be wrong.

Eleven ingredients are used in Broiled Hamburg Steak on Onion Rings:

2 cups ground lean raw beef	1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1/4 cup ground suet	3 tablespoons butter
1 cup soft fine bread crumbs	2 teaspoons onion juice
7 strips bacon	1/2 teaspoon salt
7 slices Spanish onion	1/8 teaspoon pepper
1/2 inch thick	1 tablespoon water

Lay the slices of onion in a buttered shallow baking dish. Pour over them two tablespoons of melted butter, sprinkle with salt and pepper, add the water, cover closely, and bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees F.) for 30 minutes, or until tender. In the meantime, cook the chopped parsley in one tablespoon of butter and combine with the beef, suet, crumbs, and seasonings. Knead until thoroughly mixed. Mould into seven flat cakes and wrap each around the edge, with a slice of bacon. Place each cake on an onion slice in the baking dish, and broil under direct heat for five minutes on each side. Baste occasionally with the drippings. Serve at once from the baking dish.

If it is not convenient to broil the meat cakes by direct heat, pan-broil them in a hot skillet, and serve on the onion slices.

Now, if you'd like to have a printed copy of this recipe, with a picture of the Recipe Lady wrapping the bacon around the steak--send for the leaflet called "Cooking Beef, According to the Cut."

Tomorrow: "Making the Family Budget."

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